

Media

CONTINUED
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-volved in these activities and students in the classroom if they took a more academic approach with the student media.

The proposal also suggests adding one dollar per credit hour to student fees specifically to fund the student media. That money would be distributed by a student media board, eliminating SGA from the process.

According to Faber, this would free up other SGA funds.

Mark Bannister, Department Chair of the Department of Information Networking and Telecommunications (INT) studies and member of the committee felt that it would allow for greater exposure of these disciplines.

“(It will) better prepare students and boast the quality of student media,” Bannister said.

Faber said that the committee was created to form the proposal but that any changes to the curriculum in a department or new classes would have to be handled through different channels. “That is an administrative decision for the President,” Faber said.

The proposal on media convergence is similar to the convergence that took place in the

INT department, where a formal curriculum was created to give students in electronic media studies, web media students, and data communication students experience in the other areas of study that would impact their field.

Some student media organizations are already taking advantage of media convergent opportunities. KFHS currently provides streaming music via the internet and the Leader provides news stories in an online format.

Faber said one influence behind the proposal is the success of University of Missouri using a similar program.

Another influence on this proposal was from observing media convergence at the Lawrence Journal-World, where students and faculty from the INT department traveled to for their annual trip, witnessing a combined facility where a single reporter may write a story for a newspaper, while also covering the event for the TV station or for radio.

“We ought to re-examine student journalism,” Faber said.

The proposal was drafted by The Convergent Media Education Work Group, a committee of FHSU faculty and staff in the Communications, English and INT departments respectively.

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news

Allocations

CONTINUED
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Using the equipment funding was an option for the club as well as appropriations, Cure said, and that using the equipment fund would make the total amount needed available at one time, making it more practical for their needs. In that manner Cure said, “We would love to fund them - we would love to see them do that as soon as possible.”

The attachments to Bill 06/ S/115, describing funding levels, rationale, recommendations and comments, said, “The committee recommends seeking funding from the appropriations committee instead as the request lacked structure and details and the organization has a lack of fund-

raising.”

Other groups not receiving funding had similar comments from the committee.

“We encourage student organizations to become more self sufficient with what they do.” Cure said, and “We have student monies here. We would love to help them out but, there is not enough to go around.”

All groups went through meetings with the committee to ask for SGA allocations. While the groups may not be pleased with the committees’ proposal, they were clear in their reasons for all increases and decreases in allocations.

Many groups were allocated, in the proposal, less funding the current year. One of the largest drops in funding was for the

University Leader. The committee recommended for the Leader a “decrease in funding from last years level.”

In the committee’s recommendations, they said, “The committee removed expenses from postage, other services, copier rent, general office supplies, photo supplies, and other supplies. Publishing costs were reduced by \$5,000 to allow for the printing of one paper per week. Student wages were reduced by \$2,230 back to last year’s levels.”

While SGA funding accounts for a portion of the Leader income, advertising accounts for an increasingly smaller amount of revenue. For fiscal year 2005, their advertising came up \$21,934 short of their projected advertising income, according to their allocations request. Even with their allocations from FY 2005 the Leader came up \$23,434 short of projected income, leaving the paper in the red at the end of the fiscal year.

As of Jan. 24, the Leader had only made \$10,985 of their projected \$44,000 advertising income. Again, this year the “Leader” is projecting over \$44,000 in advertising revenue, equal to their allocations request, a request the committee lowered to \$31,265.

The committee recommended to the Leader that they go to once a week printing. Cure said that the committee felt going to once a week would not reduce advertising revenue and would help lower costs. Budgeted printing cost for the Leader was \$23,600, while salary and wages totaled \$58,380.

The allocation request form from the Leader showed \$29,000 in salaries for the year, accounting for the largest portion of their budget behind postage.

Even with these shortfalls in advertising revenue, their allocations request says, “The Leader raises half of its budget independently, through advertising revenue. The advertising revenue in our FY 2007 budget proposal is a minimum. We work with minimum in our budgeted income so that the actual expenditures will not exceed actual income.”

In the SGA office in the Memorial Union, anyone is able to pick up the committees funding levels and recommendations.

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Thursday, March 16, 2006

The voice of integrity at Fort Hays State University

the edge

March 16, 2006; Volume 1, Issue 11
Hays, Kansas 67601

SGA to vote on allocations today

Organization	Amount	Percentage
University Activities Board (UAB)	73,200.00	16%
Athletic Bands	53,100.00	12%
Special Events	39,004.72	9%
Rodeo Club	37,720.00	9%
Campus Recreation and Intramural Sports	35,588.00	8%
The University Leader	31,625.00	7%
Student Government Association (SGA)	30,710.00	7%
KFHS Broadcast Council	26,000.00	6%
The Tiger's Tale	24,550.00	6%
Other Organizations	91,326.00	20%

*442,823.72 total amount for SGA Allocations.
Figure and percentages do not include 32,252.28 allocated to SGA Appropriations and Equipment funds.

James Bell
Assistant Editor

The Student Government Association will vote today at 7 p.m., in their regular meeting, on allocations for next year. The allocations committee released their proposed budget totaling \$475,076 to both acclaim and concern.

For groups or people that may want to influence the senate vote, Senator Doug Cure said the best way is just to approach them and talk to them.

Also, senators will have unlimited speaking privileges during the reading of the bill. Also, Cure said, before the senate gets to the second reading of the bill that night, there is an open forum in which anyone can speak to the senators and give justification for funding an organization, whether the argument is for greater or lesser funding. Cure said that in lieu of coming

to the meeting, an interested person could email their senator or post on the SGA forum online, found on the FHSU website.

Some groups were not pleased with the committee’s proposed budget. For example, a member of the Astronomy Club, “Rich” Zwenger, recently voiced concern in the University Leader about his club’s lack of funding.

“A lot of their stuff was for equipment,” Cure said. “Everything but \$300 was for equipment and food and we have an equipment fund,” Cure said.

Five percent of the Allocations budget is constitutionally mandated for the equipment fund, but this year a waiver was passed lowering the fund to three percent, equaling \$14,252. Cure said the reason for the lower rate was that, “The equipment

SEE 'ALLOCATIONS' ON PAGE 12

Changes proposed to student media

Robert Cummins
Staff Writer

A new proposal looks to make big changes in the way that electronic and print media are studied at FHSU, with the hope to encourage students to gain experience in multiple media forms.

The most concrete step in the proposal involves bringing The University Leader newspaper and the Tiger’s Tale magazine back into the academic curriculum as lab credits.

Currently, both the Leader and Tiger’s Tale are organized under the department of Student Affairs and are not affiliated with an academic department.

Faber said that the intent of the proposal is to encourage cooperation between different student organizations involved in media education. Such groups would include KFHS-Radio, KFHS-TV, the University Leader, the Tiger’s Tale, and Lines. These groups would be encouraged by their teachers and group sponsors to work together on projects at various times during the year, giving students greater exposure to the various forms of media available. Other forms of media discussed in the proposal and at the forum included web logs and other web media and podcasting.

Paul Faber, chair of the committee, said that the proposal tries to give students that are interested in student

media education the opportunity to study a broader range of media than that which their curriculum requires.

Faber said that the proposal will not only affect students in certain departments, but any student that shows an interest in learning more about media education.

“(This is) a proposal to the whole academic community,” Faber said.

A public forum Tuesday hosted by Faber discussed the proposal in greater detail, allowing students and faculty the opportunity to ask questions.

“There are elements that are more formal and elements that are less formal,” Faber said about the intention of the proposal. The informal aspects involve simply encouraging the groups to participate with one another while not actually requiring it. The encouragement for convergence is expected to come from the sponsors and advisers for these groups. More formal elements of the proposal include recommendations to create new curriculum in the English and Journalism departments that would include bringing in student media as lab credits.

The advisor of these student media would also be changed to a member of the academic community rather than the current sponsor who is from student affairs.

Faber expects it to be beneficial to both students in-

SEE 'MEDIA' ON PAGE 12

Relaxation

BRANDON WORF/THE EDGE
Students congregate in a circle near Picken Hall during an unusually nice day this month.

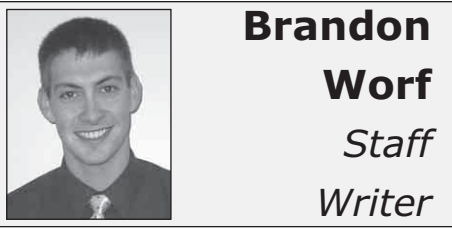
EDITORIAL
▼ on the edge
Convergent media not practical

All of the great events in history have started as a simple idea; the Convergent Media Education proposal is not one. The vague proposal was brought forward by our own tee-shirt wearing Paul Faber, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, last Tuesday night. Faber, as you may know, came here as a philosophy major, and like philosophy, the proposal was big on why, but lacking in how. How are you going to create a press corps that can do video, print, radio, and web? How are you going to get SGA to give you student funds? Who is going to be in charge of overseeing every media outlet and creating the integrated web? Most importantly, why are instructors making proposals on student media?

If convergence is inevitable, let the media outlets come to that themselves. Faculty should not be determining free student press. Of course, FHSU press is not free; it's rather expensive for the student body, so maybe we should let the press organizations fly free. After all, shouldn't the lesson we teach be that press is only free when it is independent? *The Edge* is independent. We like it. Good luck FHSU media, I hope you all can figure it out.

The Editorial Board

City over-focuses on I-70 business

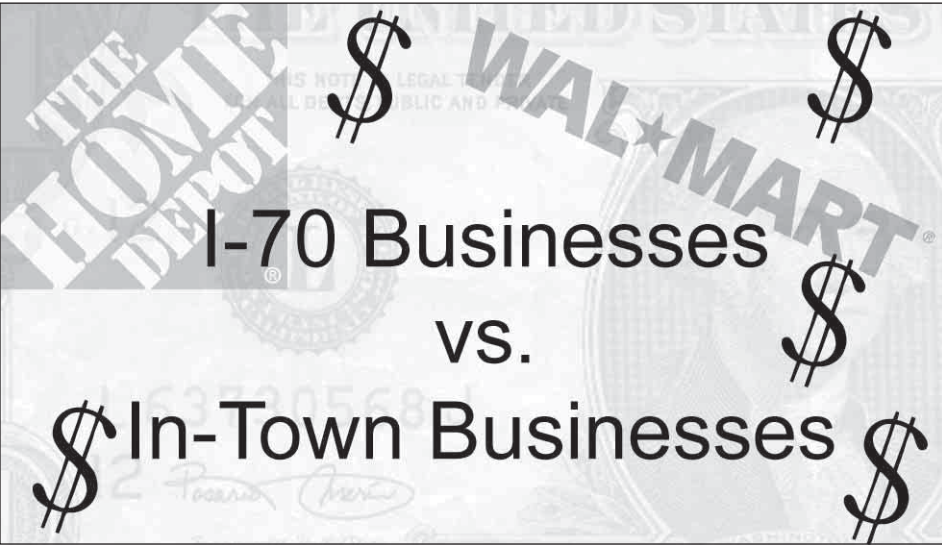


Brandon Worf
Staff Writer

Let's face it: Hays is growing; and quite quickly. The fact that Wal-Mart now sits on the north side of I-70 is a testament to the rapid development occurring in that very area. This means that the rest of the town is burgeoning just as much, right? Well, not so much really. You know that old building that Wal-Mart used to be in, you know, right next to Hastings? Yeah, it's still vacant, along with a handful of other buildings along Vine Street, the most arterial road in Hays and by far the most commercially developed. What about the mall? Isn't it supposed to be the hotbed of corporate retail stores? You know, the ones that usually trip over their own feet whilst trying to get stores into a market with a college demographic of nearly 35 percent (think American Eagle, Abercrombie, Gadzooks, and the like)? Yeah those ones...where are they? I don't see them, and the mall is kind of desolate some days. Honestly, I'd not heard of Kline's until I came to Hays. Prior to Thirsty's and Vanderbilts coming in, the old Sun Mart building sat vacant for two years. Alco finally got rid of their building and Ashley Furniture came in. Country Kitchen, those guys were gone for 18 months before Whiskey Creek bought the building. With these three recent exceptions, there are several vacancies in town left over that surprisingly nobody wants to invest in. Yet we seemingly need a new retail outlet center. You've got to be kidding me. How is it that the city commis-

sion can justify zoning new commercial development north of I-70 when half of the incumbent commercial entities are barely still here? The City of Hays is literally salivating over the prospects of new business development in that area for numerous reasons: more property tax revenue, more sales tax revenue, and more economic "boost" from the sales purported to come in from said development. All at the expense of the taxpayers and the existing businesses downtown and elsewhere, not lucky enough to get the multi-million dollar tax incentives that every governmental agency seems willing to dole out to whomever is game for building a new outlet. It's ridiculous. Without really pointing fingers or naming names, one can easily (and safely) say that much of the city commission seems to be in cahoots with the contractors, developers, and land owners for the sake of looking good...or for reasons (read: money). Home Depot had no plans to build here until the idea of a tax incentive was mentioned. Of course, the incentive came out of the taxpayers' pockets, without their consent. It's amazing how money that

should be used for things like repairing the Hall Street bridge, is used to lure large companies that invest none of their profit into the cities they build in (Wal-Mart and Home Depot, I'm looking at you). Speaking of the bridge, are the City of Hays and KDOT ever going to get around to appropriating money for fixing that? Or are they going to drag their feet on the matter, like they did with the 8th Street pipeline repair project (it's amazing how they can never seem to do this stuff in the summer when there's not 7,000 students trying to get around town). I digress. To put it in a simple context, Hays is growing, but like humanity, it has growing pains. Exacerbating those pains is not going to help the situation—this is the case where throwing money at the issue will not aid the cause. Instead of driving local businesses out of town in favor of corporate retail businesses, we need to be encouraging local business growth for the sake of our posterity and our local economic stability. To encourage growth in one area that stifles growth in another area is essentially setting up the whole area for an economic downturn that could wreak havoc for years to come.



the edge

Mission: *The Edge* newspaper staff strives to act as a voice of integrity on the campus of Fort Hays State University. *The Edge* endeavors to comprehensively cover important events and issues on campus and to approach every article with honesty, accuracy, integrity, fairness and public service in mind.

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▼ Kelly Center
FHSU sponsors Take Back the Night

James Bell
Assistant Editor

After spring break, on Thursday, March 30th at 6 p.m., the FHSU Kelly Center is sponsoring a rally called "Take Back the Night." The event is going to be held on the FHSU quad and is free for everyone. Advertising for the event says it, "is an international rally and

march that is organized in local communities with the purpose of unifying women, men, and children in an awareness of violence against women, children and families." The event, a gathering of interested persons, is to raise awareness of sexual and domestic violence. The event will feature Brian

Kinnaird, director of Justice Studies, as a guest speaker on self defense tactics, live music by Tim Anthony & the Anamals, Sue Merklein, from Northwest Kansas Domestic & Sexual Violence Services, and a march and candlelight vigil. The event will wrap up with refreshments served in the FHSU Kelly Center, Picken Hall, Room 308.

▼ the edge
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Thursday, March 16, 2006

FEATURES

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Coxe elicits critical thought in students



ZACH BECKER/THE EDGE
Professor Leland Coxe presents a lecture to his American Government class.

Robert Cummins
Staff Writer

It seems to be a popular conception in the Midwest that all university professors want to spread their liberal ways to their students, whether accurate or not.

Leland Coxe, assistant professor of Political Science and Justice Studies, however, is not one to push his views on his students. In fact, he is a self-described "hardcore moderate."

In teaching his classes, he tries to help students keep an open mind and examine important political issues by looking at the facts and drawing their own conclusions.

Coxe's perspectives on teaching are influenced greatly by his diverse educational experience, both in terms of time and location.

These experiences took him across the country, starting with his childhood in the South, branching out to the West Coast and eventually landing him in the Midwest, all over a period of nearly thirty years.

Growing up in the New Orleans, Coxe's political ideals were very much influenced by the political forces fighting for and against desegregation that he saw. Coxe saw vehemently op-

posed to segregation.

Coxe began his undergraduate study at Louisiana State University during the '70s when the Civil Rights Movement was just a recent happening - and to some - a very threatening turn of events.

In fact, when Coxe wrote a paper about how the Deep South experienced economic growth due to the Civil Rights Movement, he was accused by some as being a Communist.

Later, at Portland State University, while providing support for NAFTA - The North American Free Trade Agreement - Coxe was accused of hiding his motives for supporting NAFTA, which they said was to protect his privileged position as a white male.

"I learned narrow mindedness and intolerance can really come from any direction," Coxe said.

"Never be intimidated by the letters PhD," Coxe said in regards to another lesson that he learned. As a freshman, Coxe took an economics class with a very superior-minded professor that had received his PhD from Harvard. At one point, Coxe presented his own economic prediction. The professor informed Coxe that his prediction was nonsense and that anyone believing Coxe's

prediction didn't really understand economics. Coxe said that within two years that prediction came true. "Always be skeptical," Coxe said.

When describing his teaching style, Coxe said that he only asks that his students be ready to explain exactly how they arrived at their conclusions and to be able to justify them. Coxe explained that the way you reach your conclusion is as important as the conclusion itself.

"I like to teach you how to think your way through to your own views," Coxe said.

Coxe has noticed many differences in the college classroom from when he was in college. Coxe said that the biggest differences in the classroom come in the form of technology. Coxe said that he still remembers when he took classes that required the use of typewriters for papers and essays.

Coxe said that he liked teaching at FHSU and enjoyed the Hays community. He said that he was especially impressed with the neighborhood support he received earlier this year when his wife required surgery.

"Hays community and FHSU have been tremendously supportive during my wife's surgery and convalescence," Coxe said.



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Music department reaches to community

Brandon Worf
Staff Writer

Musicians are a breed all their own. Most will spend a majority of their lives consumed by a profession that the rest of society will see very little of.

Practice to a musician is the equivalent of a day job, and for many of them, it is earnestly so.

For those lucky enough to know a person majoring in music, they probably realize by now that they're some of the busiest people on campus, hands down, and most don't understand the concept of spare time anymore.

Thirteen or 14 hours to a music major is the equivalent of about 21 hours to anyone else in a different field. Enough said.

Despite a lack of free time, some still find enough will power to get together and help represent the department that so few at Fort Hays really know about.

Enter the Musical Arts Council.

The Musical Arts Council (MAC) is a group of students all affiliated with the department of music in one way or another, who have formed the organization to represent the FHSU Department of Music and to act as a liaison between the music department, the rest of the university and the community around it.

MAC President, Trevor Duell, said that, "The Musical Arts Council essentially acts as a student ambassador for the Music Department. We as a council hope to work with other departments on campus to help promote all the arts

together, not just audible, but visual as well."

Despite being recently formed, the MAC has already found ways to improve exposure of other departments to the music department and vice versa.

"We have already collaborated with the Art Department to have student artwork display before and after certain concerts, and that seems to have gone over really well with the art faculty. We're hoping to undertake more projects and requests in the future in the hopes that we can provide the community and the university with a more comprehensive experience of the Arts, whether it be visual or performing."

For those outside of the department wishing to perhaps utilize a local musician, the MAC also hopes to serve as a "booking agency" for those occasions.

"As a liaison to the community, we also hope to act as an agent for providing people with musical acts for certain events, whatever they may be. Say, for example, if someone is interested in having a jazz combo for a wedding reception or maybe a string quartet for a business function, they could contact us, and we could provide them with the necessary personnel for that situation."

The Council recently helped coordinate the reception for the first annual FHSU Music Department Gala, which helped raise money for music scholarships.

The MAC is also in the process of planning and coordinating the annual music scholarship and awards ceremony, where departmental and donor scholarship winners are



BRANDON WORF/THE EDGE

Members of the Musical Arts Council, including university Music Department chair Matt Means, discuss topics while in subcommittees in Malloy Hall Wednesday night.

formally awarded to various students involved in music.

In the future, the Musical Arts Council will continue to serve as a bridge between the rest of the community and the seemingly secluded music department, in hopes to provide the community with quality musical entertainment and fulfillment, in return for the exposure gained from co-operating with other groups and departments.

The MAC hopes to be the people to call when someone needs a performance group for their next classy shindig or big event.

▼ Allocations

Christian Challenge's funding raises concern

James Bell
Assistant Editor

If the Student Government Association's Allocations Committee's proposal is adopted by the full senate, Christian Challenge, one of the largest FHSU student organizations, will be one of the organizations to receive a bump in funding next year.

The amount requested from Christian Challenge totaled \$17,300, down \$425 from last

year's request. Last year was the first year Christian Challenge requested allocations and Daniel Williams, president of Christian Challenge said, the committee recommended they receive over \$8,000, but it was trimmed down by the full senate to \$4,240.

The Christian Challenge's allocation request form showed income totaling \$29,535 this year, including the \$4,240 allocated from SGA, down from the previous year with income total-

ing \$34,430, a year in which no allocations were given. While budgeted expenses total \$34,560 for next year, the committee recommended to the senate only \$4,500.

"As our organization grows, we were going to need more resources," Williams said.

Some FHSU students, though, see problems with a religious organization receiving SGA funds.

Doug Cure, chairman of the allocations committee, said, after

consulting with FHSU counsel, that not funding the organization simply because it is a religious one would be a violation of freedom of religion, regardless of separation of church and state.

The organization falls under student organization guidelines and has approval of the Student Organizations Committee.

Williams said they are a non-denominational organization, and they, "welcome all."

Their organization has "anyone from atheist, to Baptist, to Presbyterian, to Catholic, to other religions."

Williams said the goal of Christian Challenge is, "To develop spiritually and intellectually and to really become a more rounded person to better impact this campus and our home towns and whatever we are doing."

The purpose statement of Christian Challenge, though, appears far less open and states, "We exist for the Glory of God. We are a loving group who welcomes students and gives them the opportunity to know Jesus Christ as Lord and to grow in his likeness, that all people would worship God."

SGA, in attachments to Bill 06/S/115 said, "The committee recommends an increase from last year's funding level as the organization is growing. The committee removed part of travel, lodging, and registration for trips. The committee removed funds requested for International Student Ministries and Freshman Outreach because of issues with personal gain items, which cannot be funded." In the committee's recommendations, "The committee recommends more fundraising activities as relying on donations can be risky."

"Whatever SGA is able to help us out with is definitely received, welcomed," and, Williams said, "appreciated very much."

"I wish that SGA had enough money to be able to allocate full funding for every organization," Williams said.

The SGA vote on student funding is tonight at the SGA meeting, 7 p.m., in the Memorial Union.

Questions to Christian Challenge can be directed to Daniel Williams. The group meets every Tuesday night at 8 p.m. in the Agape Southern Baptist Church of Hays on 13th and Harvest.

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The Death Penalty:

Capital punishment’s history examined

Stories by Martha J. Jones/*Professor of Justice Studies*
Design by Zach Becker/*The Edge*

Historians credit great Babylonian King Hammurabi with codifying Mesopotamia’s many formal and informal rules.

Death penalties and fines were common, while *lex talionis*, or the law of retaliation, was accepted. The death penalty was also part of 7th Century B.C.’s Draconian Code of Athens which imposed the death penalty for all crimes.

Death sentences were carried out as crucifixions, beatings, burning the offender alive, impalement and drowning. In the 10th Century A.D., hanging was the usual method of execution in Britain.

In the following century, William the Conqueror would not allow persons to be executed for any crime, except in times of war. However, in the 16th Century, under the reign of Henry VIII, as many as 72,000 people are estimated to have been executed for capital offenses such as marrying a Jew, treason and not confessing to a crime.

By the 17th Century, nearly all felonies (some 222 crimes) warranted the death penalty. Felonies included chopping down trees, stealing and robbery. Because of the severity of the death penalty, many juries would not convict defendants if the offense did not involve violence. This led to reforms of Britain’s death penalty. From 1823-1837, the death penalty was eliminated for over 100 of the 222 felony crimes.

America’s view of the death penalty was greatly influenced by Britain .When European settlers came to the new world, they brought

over the practice of capital punishment.

The first recorded execution in America was that of Captain George Kendall, convicted of spying in Spain. In 1612, Virginia Governor Sir Thomas Dale enacted the Divine, Moral and Martial Laws, which imposed the death penalty for such crimes as hitting one’s parents, stealing grapes, killing chickens, denouncing God and trading with Indians .

During colonial times, there rose an abolitionist movement whose roots stemmed from the writings of European theorists Voltaire and Bentham as well as English Quakers John Bellers and John Howard. The first attempt to abolish the death penalty in America occurred when Thomas Jefferson introduced a bill to revise Virginia’s death penalty laws, limiting the death penalty to the crimes of murder and treason. The bill failed by one vote.

In the mid 19th century, the abolitionist movement gained momentum in the northeast. Many states reduced the number of capital crimes and built state penitentiaries.

In 1846, Michigan abolished the death penalty except for treason. Later, Wisconsin and Rhode Island abolished the death penalty for all crimes. Still, most states held onto capital punishment, sometimes increasing the number of crimes punishable by death, especially for crimes committed by slaves.

In an effort to make the death penalty more palatable to the public, some states began passing laws against mandatory death sentencing. By 1963, all mandatory capital punishment laws had been abolished.

During the Civil War, more attention was given to the anti-slavery movement, so opposition to the death penalty waned. After the war, there was a renewed interest in the death penalty, with emphasis on the means of execution.

The electric chair, introduced in

1888, soon became the preferred method of execution. The first person executed in the electric chair was William Kemmler in 1890. In 1924, the use of cyanide gas was introduced as a more humane way to execute prisoners. Gee Jon was the first person executed by lethal gas.

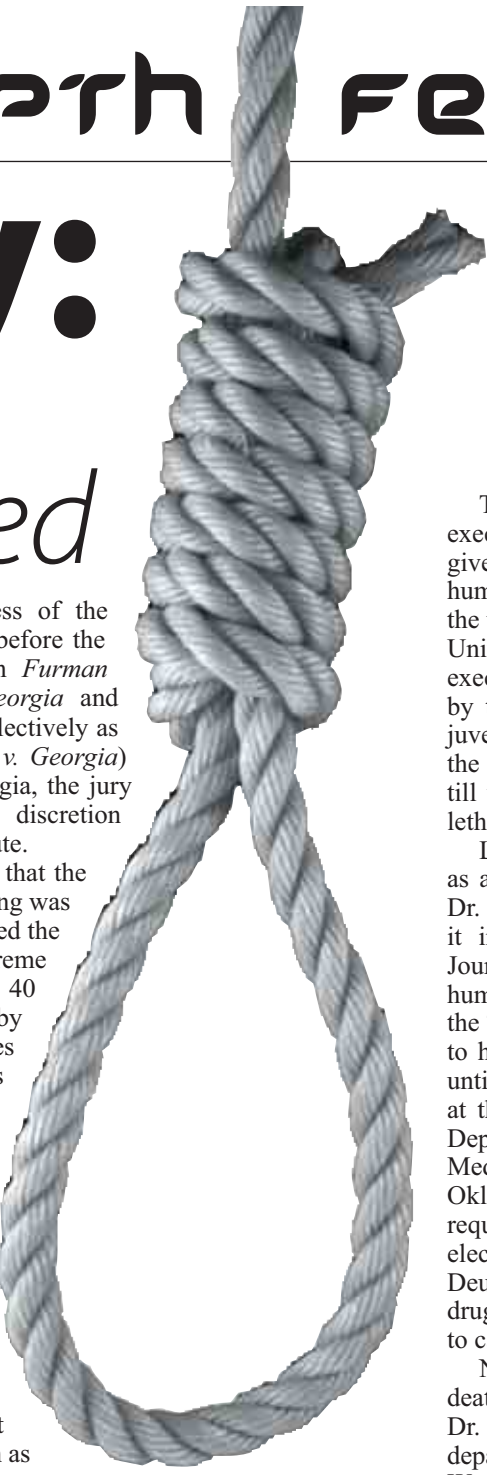
During the 1930’s, America, in the midst of Prohibition and the Great Depression, carried out more executions than in any other decade. There was an average of 167 executions per year. In the 1950’s, society moved away from capital punishment. Many allied nations either abolished or limited the death penalty and the United States followed suit by decreasing the number of executions dramatically. In the 1940’s, there were 1289 executions; in the 50’s, this dropped to 715; and in the years following, from 1960-1976, there were only 191 executions. In 1966, public support for the death penalty fell to an all time low, with only 42 percent of Americans favoring capital punishment.

It was during the 1960’s that the question of the death penalty being constitutional arose. It was suggested the death penalty was cruel and unusual and therefore in violation of the Eighth Amendment.

In the late 1960’s, the Supreme Court heard two cases that dealt with discretion given to the prosecutor and the jury in capital cases. The first case was *U.S. v. Jackson* (1968), where the Supreme Court heard arguments regarding a provision of the federal kidnapping statute requiring that the death penalty be imposed only upon the recommendation of the jury. The Supreme Court ruled that this practice was unconstitutional because it encouraged defendants to waive their right to a jury trial to avoid receiving the death penalty.

The next case heard by the Supreme Court, *Witherspoon v. Illinois* (1968), involved juror’s reservations about the death penalty. The Supreme Court held that a potential juror’s mere reservations about the death penalty were not sufficient enough grounds to dismiss that person from serving as juror in a death penalty case. Jurors could be disqualified only if the prosecutor could show that the juror’s attitude toward capital punishment would prevent him or her from making an impartial decision about the punishment.

INDEPTH FEATURE



A look at the history and methods of execution

Lethal Injection

The most modern of the current execution methods, lethal injection, also gives the impression of being the most humane. Lethal injection is now virtually the universal method of execution in the United States, with all but one of the 71 executions carried out during 2002 being by this method. Of the 819 (22 being juveniles) executions performed since the reinstatement of capital punishment till the end of 2002, 656 have been by lethal injection .

Lethal injection was first considered as a means of execution in 1888 when Dr. J. Mount Bleyer recommended it in an article in the Medico-Legal Journal suggesting that it would be more humane, cheaper and robs the prisoner of the “hero” status that was often attached to hangings. The idea did not catch on until in 1977 Dr. Stanley Deutsch, who at the time chaired the Anesthesiology Department of Oklahoma University Medical School, received a call by Oklahoma state senator, Bill Dawson, requesting a cheaper alternative to the electric chair for state executions. Dr. Deutsch described a way to administer drugs through an intravenous drip so as to cause a quick, painless death.

Not everyone is of the opinion that death by lethal injection is painless. Dr. Edward Brunner, chairman of the department of Anesthesia at North-Western University Medical School

submitted an affidavit on behalf of death row inmates in Illinois in Brunner states that lethal injection creates a substantial risk that prisoners will suffocate or suffer excruciating pain during the three chemical injections. In addition, Albert Pierrepont, who was one of Britain’s most productive hangmen and who witnessed an early lethal injection, considered the process sadistic, mostly due to the length of time it took for the prisoner to fall unconscious .

Lethal injection appears to be much less dramatic than the electric chair or the gas chamber and it is probably easier for the staff and witnesses to watch as it looks more like a surgical procedure than an execution. However, lethal injection increases the risk that medical personnel will be involved in killing for the state, in breach of long-standing principles of medical ethics. Lethal injections are now the primary mode of execution in the United States and it seems to provide a method of execution that is relatively cheap, reasonably simple to administer and perceived as acceptable by the public. Inevitably, as lethal injections take hold in America’s society, hangings, electrocution and the gas chamber are viewed as old fashioned and crude. America appears to be constantly looking for more efficient ways to kill people, not only to make killing easier, but serve to justify retaining the death penalty .

Electric Chair

The electric chair was introduced as a “modern and humane alternative to hanging by New York State in 1890. It soon became the preferred method of execution in the in the majority of states as an alternative to frequent botched hangings.

The introductions of the electric chair was not, as most people believed, a desire for more humane means of execution, but rather an effort by Thomas Edison to prove to the public that Edison’s system of delivering electricity with the direct current system (DC) was superior to George Westinghouse’s system of alternating current (AC).

In an attempt to discredit Westinghouse, Edison convinced the state of New York to electrocute condemned criminals with AC current. Westinghouse not wanting AC current to be used for electrocution claimed that the electric chair constituted cruel and unusual punishment.

Though all methods of execution can

Gas Chamber

Inspired by the use of poison gas in World War I and the popularity of the gas oven as a suicide technique, the gas chamber was believed to be more humane than hanging. Gassing was originally proposed by Dr. Allen McClean Hamilton, a toxicologist who suggested that gassing would be more humane than hanging or electrocution. The original idea was to gas the prisoner in the cell while sleeping, without prior warning. This proved impractical and thus the gas chamber was invented by Major Delos Turner and was first used in 1924. Execution by lethal gas requires the prisoner to contribute to one’s own death by actively inhaling the lethal fumes. The prisoner generally struggles and shows great signs of suffering. A study of the execution records of 113 prisoners executed at San Quentin showed that the average time to kill an inmate with the gas chamber was 9.3 minutes.

For reasons of humanity, safety (risk of a potential leak killing staff and witnesses) and cost (a new chamber is estimated to cost at least \$300,000), most states have abandoned the gas chamber.

Hanging

Each method of execution has its own special lore, appeals and drawbacks (Masur, 1989). Dating back more than 2000 years, hanging was deemed quick and painless. The rope was first boiled in water to remove elasticity, and then it was installed on the gallows, where it was pulled and stretched to remove any remaining elasticity. The hangman’s noose consisted of 13 coils wrapped around a loop placed around the condemned’s neck with the knot positioned behind the left ear. The condemned was positioned over a trap door, was hooded, and had the legs and arms bound. The trap door was sprung open by a lever and the fall caused the rope to dislocate the neck causing an instantaneous death. Hangings served as an instrument of shame. The drama of public executions was designed to elicit remorse and shame from the felon in a ritual to confirm guilt and receive a sort of compensation for the victim. Hangings consisted of a parade through town, from jail to scaffold; hours of speeches and sermons; and a confession by the criminal to a usually large crowd.

Opponents of the death penalty argue that hanging is not always guaranteed to bring immediate death. The problem with hanging concerns drop length. If the drop length is too short, the victim strangles. If the drop length is too long, the result is decapitation. Since the first recorded hanging in 1622, there have been approximately 13,350 people executed by judicial hanging. Only three states, New Hampshire, Washington and Delaware still offer hanging as an option for carrying out the death sentence.

be botched, electrocutions go wrong frequently and dramatically, in part because the equipment in most states is old and in need of repair. With few exceptions, wooden electric chairs built before 1930 were made by prisoners and are still used today. One example of a botched electrocution by electric chair took place in 1946. At age 17, Willie Francis survived Francis’ “execution”. Francis commented that there was burning in the head and left leg, and that Francis’ mouth tasted like cold peanut butter and the current jolted the body hard against the straps. Francis was successfully executed a year later.

The electric chair was used in 19 states at various times and also by the Philippines, the only country outside America to use it. 149 men and 2 women have been electrocuted in the United States since the Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment in 1977, making it the second most common method, after lethal injection. It is still a legal method of execution in seven states.

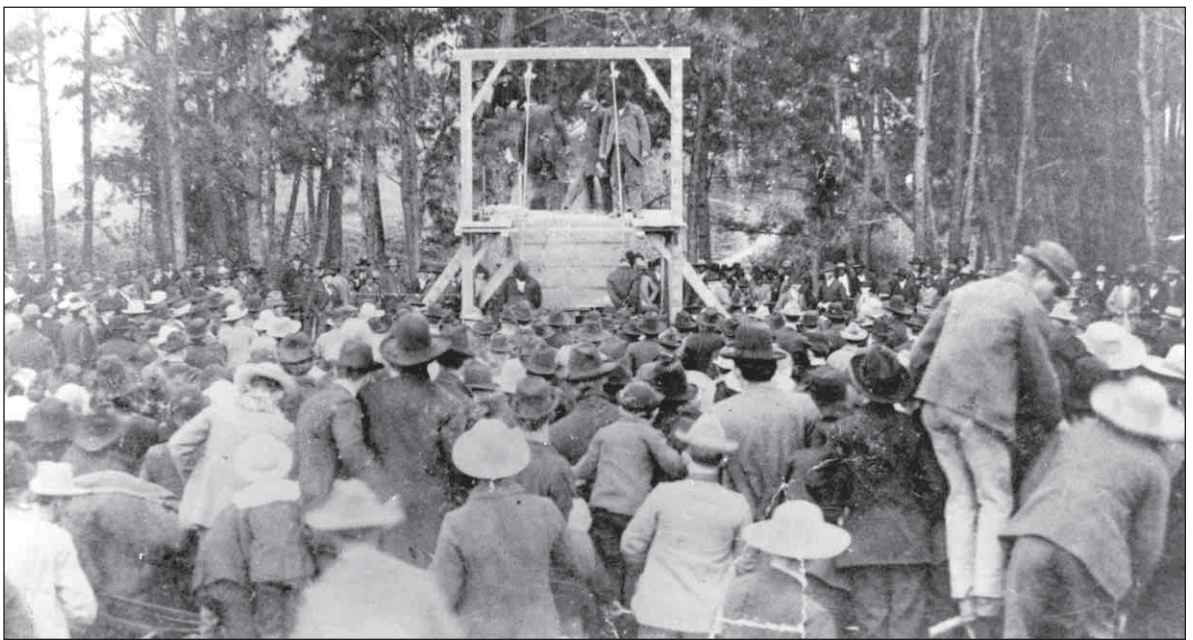


PHOTO FROM BELLVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY/BELLVILLE, TEXAS
Public hangings were common during early periods of United States history. They often drew large crowds to watch the spectacle, as evidenced in this undated picture from Bellville, Texas.



William Kemmler became the first victim of the early electric chair, executed with it at New York’s Auburn Prison in 1890.